

3. RULES APPLICATION

In order to ensure that all crews consistently interpret rules the same way, the following fouls shall be called only as stipulated.

Note:

1. The intention is for these interpretations to apply in full adult games.
2. A stricter interpretation of the rules is appropriate in games involving youth/junior players and/or where the players are all obviously inexperienced.
3. If a flag is thrown for a foul where these principles indicate that it should not have been, the penalty should still be enforced. Never wave a flag off, once thrown, if it signifies a foul by rule.
4. Also bear in mind section 5.2 on common sense officiating.

3.1 – Definitions

1. **Point of attack** is defined as follows:
 - (a) on a running play, it is the area in advance of the runner – if he changes direction the point of attack changes;
 - (b) on a passing play, it is anywhere in the vicinity of the passer or any player attempting to reach the passer;
 - (c) on a kick play, it is anywhere in the vicinity of the kicker or any player attempting to reach the kicker or block the kick.
2. **Obvious:** An action is “obvious” if it would be visibly apparent to a spectator who knew the rules or to an official watching the game on video. Generally, anything that takes place in the open field, or by a player standing alone, is obvious; anything that takes place in close line play or in a pile-up is not obvious.

3.2 – Contact fouls

1. **Offensive holding:**
 - (a) Only call it when *all* of the following conditions are met:
 - (i) the foul is **visibly apparent**, i.e. if it wouldn't show up on video, don't call it;
 - (ii) the foul **affects the play**, i.e. if it is away from the point of attack, don't call it;
 - (iii) the action is **demonstrably restrictive**, i.e. if the player is not *illegally* slowed down or forced to take a longer route to his target, don't call it;
 - (iv) the foul **disadvantages the opponent**, i.e. if it actually moves the player the way he wants to go, don't call it.
 - (b) Don't call it if *any* of the following conditions are met:
 - (i) the player held makes the tackle (behind the neutral zone or where there is no neutral zone);
 - (ii) it happens at the same time as a tackle elsewhere on the field;
 - (iii) it is behind the neutral zone and a forward pass has already been thrown, or is in the process of being thrown;
 - (iv) it is part of a double-team block (unless a takedown occurs, or the defender breaks the double team and is pulled back);
 - (v) it is the result of a defensive rip (i.e. the defensive player raising the offensive player's arm);
 - (vi) the player held makes no effort to get free of the block (i.e. he “gives up”).
 - (c) **Takedowns** in the open field or within the tackle box are obvious enough to need calling whether or not they affect the play.

2. **Defensive holding:**
 - (a) Downfield on passing plays, there is no *point of attack* — a foul can occur anywhere.
 - (b) Always call fouls that prevent the passer throwing the ball and lead to a sack.
 - (c) *Clotheslining* a receiver at the head or neck should be called as a personal foul.
 - (d) Contact that does not demonstrably impede a receiver should be ignored.
 - (e) A grab of the receiver's jersey that restricts the receiver and takes away his feet should be called.
 - (f) Holding should be called against defenders who clearly *illegally* restrict an offensive player from making a lead block for the runner (this includes pulling linemen on trap and sweep plays), but not where the offensive player is too far away from the play to become involved.
3. **Illegal use of hands:** Call it the same as for offensive holding, unless the initial contact in a block is on the opponent's helmet or facemask, in which case it must always be called. Make sure you see the initial contact: it is not a foul if a player's hands slide up to a point above the opponent's shoulders. Remember, however, that continuous contact to the helmet is a personal foul.
4. **Clipping:** Only call this if you saw the blocker's last two strides before the contact (so that you are certain you know which direction he came from), *and* if you saw the opponent he hit before the block (so that you know whether he turned his back or not). You must see the point of initial contact. Remember that contact to the side is legal. See the entire act.
5. **Illegal block in the back:**
 - (a) Before calling this, apply the same conditions as you would apply for holding, but also apply the conditions for calling clipping, particularly the need to see the entire act.
 - (b) If one hand is on the number and the other hand is on the side and the initial force is on the number, it is a block in the back.
 - (c) Pushes in the back should not be called unless they result in the opponent being knocked down or pushed off balance so that he stumbles and misses making a tackle or block.
 - (d) Charging into a player's back away from the play may be called as unnecessary roughness. This may be called regardless of the timing of the block relative to the end of the play.
 - (e) Be particularly alert when you see an offensive player chasing a defensive player (and vice versa when the defensive player is not attempting to reach the ball).
 - (f) On a fair catch, do not call it if the foul occurs away from the play as the catch is being made.
6. **Roughing the passer:**
 - (a) If the defensive player's initial contact on the passer is at his head, it is always a foul (unless the passer ducks into it).
 - (b) If the defensive player spears the passer, call it as roughing so the penalty can be tacked on to the end of the run.
 - (c) If the defensive player's initial contact on the passer is at his knees, it is always a foul unless it is a slight contact, or the defensive player was blocked into it, or the passer does something to encourage it.
 - (d) It is a foul if a defender (in front of the passer) takes two steps before contacting the passer after the ball has been thrown/released. A defender behind the passer is given a little more leeway.
 - (e) Defensive players who make a legitimate attempt to avoid or reduce contact are given the benefit of the doubt.

- (f) When in doubt, it is roughing the passer if the defender's intent is to punish.
7. **Roughing/running into the kicker:**
- (a) Generally, contact with the kicker's kicking leg will be considered as *running into the kicker*, and contact with his plant leg will be considered as *roughing the kicker*.
 - (b) Any time the kicker or holder are knocked off their feet it should be called as *roughing*.
 - (c) Where the kicker makes a move before the kick that is not part of the normal kicking motion, then it is no longer obvious that a kick will be made and there will probably be no foul unless the defensive player is out to punish him. This is also the case if the ball is snapped high or wide of the kicker.
8. **Defensive pass interference:**
- (a) Actions that constitute defensive pass interference include:
 - (i) **Not playing the ball** — Early contact by a defender (who is not playing the ball) that impedes or restricts the receiver's opportunity to make the catch.
 - (ii) **Playing through an opponent** — Playing through the receiver (i.e. contacting him in the back or on the side of him furthest from the ball), even if attempting to play the ball.
 - (iii) **Grabbing an arm** — Grabbing the receiver's arm in a manner that restricts his opportunity to catch a pass.
 - (iv) **Arm bar** — Extending an arm across the receiver's body to impede his ability to catch a pass, whether or not the defender is playing the ball.
 - (v) **Cut off** — Cutting off or riding a receiver out of the path to the ball by making contact with him without playing the ball (i.e. before the defender looks for the ball).
 - (vi) **Hook and turn** — Hooking a receiver around the waist that causes his body to turn prior to the ball arriving (even if the defender is trying to get to the ball).
 - (b) Actions that do *not* constitute defensive pass interference include:
 - (i) Incidental contact by a defender's hands, arms or body in the act of moving to the ball that does not materially affect the route of the receiver. If in doubt as to whether the route was materially affected, there is no interference.
 - (ii) Inadvertent tangling of feet when both (or neither) players are playing the ball.
 - (iii) Contact occurs during a pass that is clearly uncatchable by the involved players.
 - (iv) Laying a hand on the receiver that does not turn or impede him until after the ball has arrived.
 - (v) Contact on a "hail mary" pass unless it is clear and obvious pass interference.
 - (c) Further notes:
 - (i) A stationary player (in position to catch the ball) who is displaced from his position has been fouled.
 - (ii) It is never pass interference if the defensive player touches the ball before contacting the opponent.
 - (iii) Interference must be obvious to be called.
 - (iv) Remember that the defense has as much right to the ball as the offense.
 - (v) It is crucial to identify which players are playing the ball and which are not.
 - (vi) Normally, an offensive receiver will try to catch the ball with two hands. If the defender goes up with only one hand, know what the other one is doing.
 - (vii) When judging whether a pass is catchable, imagine how far the receiver could have run, and how high or wide he could have jumped, if he had not been impeded.

9. Offensive pass interference:

- (a) Actions that constitute offensive pass interference include:
 - (i) **Pushing off** —Initiating contact with a defender by shoving or pushing off, thus creating a separation in an attempt to catch a pass.
 - (ii) **Driving through** —Driving through a defender who has established a position on the field.
 - (iii) **Blocking** —Before the pass is thrown, blocking that occurs anywhere down field. After the pass is thrown, blocking that occurs down field within 20 yards of where the pass is thrown to.
- (b) Actions that do *not* constitute offensive pass interference include:
 - (i) Incidental contact by a receiver's hands, arms or body in the act of moving to the ball that does not materially affect the route of the defender. If in doubt as to whether the route was materially affected, there is no interference.
 - (ii) Inadvertent tangling of feet when both (or neither) players are playing the ball.
 - (iii) Contact occurring during a pass that is clearly uncatchable by the involved players.
 - (iv) Blocking downfield when a screen pass is overthrown and lands beyond the neutral zone, unless such contact prevents a defensive player from catching the ball.
 - (v) Contact on a pick play when the defensive player is already blocking the offensive player.
- (c) Further notes:
 - (i) Non-flagrant contact well away from the play should not be called.
 - (ii) Blocking down field can be called even if the passer is legally grounding the ball.
 - (iii) Do not call offensive pass interference if either foot of the blocker is within one yard of the neutral zone.
 - (iv) If in doubt as to which player initiated a block, the initiator will be the one who is upright or leaning forward and the player blocked will be knocked back.

10. Late hit:

- (a) Be more likely to call it the later the hit or the more severe the contact. Slight contact immediately after the ball is dead should not be called.
- (b) Any deliberate push against a runner out of bounds is a foul.
- (c) Use of the helmet is a foul even if only slightly late.
- (d) When a runner is near the sideline, contact that occurs before the runner has a foot down out of bounds is a legal hit.
- (e) When a runner is out of bounds but continues running down the sideline in bounds, any subsequent hit is legal provided he has not eased up and the whistle has not blown.

11. Facemask:

- (a) There should be very few five-yard facemask penalties, and only for obvious grasping and letting go.
- (b) Incidental grasping in a pile of players should not be called unless there is twisting that makes it a 15-yard penalty.
- (c) Remember that a facemask foul involves *grasping* the helmet or facemask, not simply *touching* it.
- (d) A five-yard penalty is for *incidental* contact — **never** use the words “inadvertent” or “unintentional” – intent is not an issue.

12. Unnecessary roughness:

- (a) An act that occurs well away from the play may be classed as a personal foul even though the act itself is legal. In other words, it is the location of the players with respect to the play that causes the foul, not the legality of the contact.
- (b) Be certain that the act wasn't justified by the play situation (e.g. an interception or fumble return or a broken play). If a player is moving towards the play, he is a fair target: if he is standing still, he is not.
- (c) It is not a foul if two players are each blocking each other – only contact against a player off his guard needs to be penalised.
- (d) For unnecessary hits away from the ball near the end of a play, make them dead-ball fouls rather than live-ball ones.
- (e) When a player is hit after giving himself up, a foul is warranted.
- (f) Fouls on the runner after a touchdown that are obviously late must be called.

13. Roughing the snapper:

- (a) This foul can only occur when it is reasonably obvious that a scrimmage kick will be made. In other words, only on field goal and PAT attempts, or when a team lines up in a punting formation on 4th down.
- (b) Don't be picky about the one second interval. If the snapper is upright before the one second has elapsed then permit contact, but if he takes longer to recover then allow him more protection.
- (c) Don't call a foul if a defensive player contacts the snapper after being blocked by an adjacent offensive lineman.
- (d) Disqualify any player who attempts to punish by contact to the snapper's helmet or spears using the defender's own helmet.

14. Defenceless players: In the following situations, players should generally be regarded as being "defenceless" (especially if contact is above their shoulders):

- (a) quarterbacks (or other obvious passers) after the pass has been thrown, or the ball has been pitched or handed off, and they do not move to participate in the play;
- (b) kickers and holders after the kick has been made, and they do not move to participate in the play;
- (c) kick returners while looking up in the air at the ball;
- (d) kick returners who have just touched the ball and are trying to secure it;
- (e) receivers who have attempted, but failed, to touch a pass;
- (f) receivers who have relaxed because they realise that the pass is uncatchable;
- (g) runners, once their forward progress is stopped and they make no further effort to advance;
- (h) any players who have relaxed because the ball has become dead;
- (i) any players who are obviously out of the play.

3.3 – Non-contact fouls

1. Delay of game:

- (a) If Team A is still in the huddle, or moving into formation, with 10 seconds to go, warn them verbally that there are 10 seconds remaining. Always throw the flag when the count reaches zero, unless the snap is very imminent (i.e. the quarterback is calling out "huts"), in which case he can have an extra second.
- (b) After a score, it is a delay of game if either team is not on the field (or on the field but still in the huddle) within one minute regardless of whether the ready for play has been given or not. For a first offence warn the Head Coach of the team rather than throw a flag.

- (c) If no players from Team B are ready to play when Team A is set to snap the ball following a timeout, penalise Team B for delay of game. Do *not* give Team A a free play. The officials on the sideline are responsible for ensuring that the captain or coach of the team knows that the timeout is about to end.
 - (d) The Referee or Umpire should verbally inform Team A that they may not snap the ball until Team B has had an opportunity to complete substitutions it is making. The Umpire may stand over the ball momentarily. If the play clock expires during the hold-up, Team A is penalised for delay of game.
2. **Players not within the nine-yard lines:** On a scrimmage play don't call this unless it is obvious. On a free kick, the Umpire and the wing officials must ensure that all Team A players are within the nine-yard lines before signalling to the Referee that they are ready.
 3. **False start:** Movement by an offensive player is not a false start unless either (i) he moves one or both feet; (ii) it is sudden; or (iii) it causes a defensive player to react by entering the neutral zone. If a running back misses the snap count and makes a sudden movement, it is a false start.
 4. **Offside:**
 - (a) When a defensive player, before the snap, moves and an offensive player subsequently moves, a conference between the Umpire and the wing officials is mandatory. This is to determine if the defensive player was in the neutral zone and if the offensive player was threatened. When in question, the offensive player *is* threatened.
 - (b) When a defensive player, before the snap, obviously moves beyond (not simply into) the neutral zone, blow the whistle and call it as a dead-ball offside foul. This is to protect the safety of Team A players.
 - (c) Don't rule a defensive player offside if he is stationary and only intruding on the neutral zone by a trivial amount.
 - (d) Don't be picky about offside, particularly on fields that are not marked perfectly.
 - (e) Don't call offside if the defensive player is moving forward at the snap but is not actually in the neutral zone.
 5. **Illegal motion:**
 - (a) A player is in illegal motion only if his forward movement is obvious.
 - (b) A motion man angling forward while in motion at the snap has committed a live-ball foul.
 6. **Ineligible receiver downfield:**
 - (a) Call it only if it is obvious.
 - (b) An ineligible receiver must be clearly more than 1 yard down field.
 - (c) If a lineman blocks downfield, call it as ineligible downfield unless he goes far enough to block a linebacker or defensive back in pass coverage in which case call it as offensive pass interference.
 - (d) Only regard a wide receiver as covering a tight end on the line of scrimmage if there is no stagger between their alignments. If in doubt, the tight end is *not* covered up.
 - (e) Don't call it if the offense are legally throwing the ball beyond the neutral zone to save a loss of yardage.
 7. **Kick catch interference:**
 - (a) Anything that impedes the receiver from the opportunity to catch the ball should be called a foul. This includes:
 - (i) contact with the receiver (however incidental);
 - (ii) running menacingly close to the receiver;

- (iii) standing too close to the receiver;
 - (iv) yelling while close to the receiver;
 - (v) waving arms in front of the receiver;
 - (vi) being positioned in front of the receiver in such a way that the receiver is forced to step around the opponent or change path in an effort to catch the ball.
- (b) It is not a foul where:
- (i) A Team A player runs past the receiver without touching him or making him change course.
 - (ii) The receiver “gives up” his attempt to catch the kick too easily.
 - (iii) The receiver catches the ball and there was no contact and the extent of any non-contact interference is slight or in doubt. Don’t award cheap 15-yard penalties.
- (c) A player who viciously contacts a potential kick receiver has committed a flagrant personal foul and should be disqualified. Give only the personal foul signal (not the signal for kick catch interference) in this case.
- (d) A player who is in the process of catching a kick must be given an unimpeded opportunity to complete the catch before being contacted. This protection terminates if the player muffs the ball, unless he has given a valid fair catch signal and still has an opportunity to complete the catch. (See Rule 6-5-1-a.)
8. **Intentional grounding:**
- (a) Never call it if the passer was contacted while in the act of throwing the ball, or if the ball is touched. Under these circumstances you must assume the passer intended to throw the ball to a receiver. However, if the contact was before the passer starts his throwing motion, the pass must have a more reasonable opportunity to be caught than if the contact is after he starts his motion.
 - (b) Do not call intentional grounding if the passer throws the ball away (except straight down) when not under defensive pressure. He is entitled to waste a down if he is in no danger of being sacked. The clock is not a factor.
 - (c) Don’t call it if the pass is intercepted.
 - (d) If the passer throws the ball at the feet of a receiver who is not looking to catch the ball, it will normally be intentional grounding.
 - (e) Getting the ball to within one yard of the neutral zone is to be regarded as close enough. Don’t be technical on this.
9. **Illegal substitution:**
- (a) If a replaced player is still technically on the field of play at the snap, but he is well out of the way (within a few yards of the sideline) and no opponent is reacting to his movement off the field, then don’t call it.
 - (b) Similarly if substitutes enter the field momentarily before the ball is dead but don’t interfere with play, then don’t call it.
 - (c) If the offense breaks its huddle with 12 or more players, this confuses the opposition and should always be penalised. Similarly, if the defense have 12 or more players on the field for more than 3 seconds without identifying who is going off, they should be penalised.
 - (d) Always try to make the foul illegal substitution rather than illegal participation.
10. **Failure to wear mandatory equipment:** Regard failure to have a mouthpiece or to secure all points of a chinstrap as seriously as failure to wear a helmet. If you observe a player leaving the huddle without a mouthpiece or chinstraps, remind him to secure his equipment. Players who ignore the reminder must be penalised, but give quarterbacks and other players calling signals more time to do so. Restricted lineman can be penalised as soon as they place a hand on or near the ground. The same procedure applies to players wearing opaque eye shields.

11. **Illegal equipment:** Anything that might be a risk to participant safety must be dealt with before the ball is next put in play. Other infringements may be left for the player to rectify next time he leaves the field, but must be rectified before he can be allowed to return.
12. **Illegal forward pass:** For a passer to be ruled beyond the line of scrimmage when he releases the ball, his entire body and ball must be beyond the neutral zone.

3.4 – Unsportsmanlike conduct and fighting

1. Only penalise spiking after a score if it taunts an opponent. It need not be intentional, but does have to be in the direction of an opponent.
2. Celebration is different from taunting – be more tolerant of it. A "sack dance" over a tackled opponent should always be penalised.
3. If a player or coach abuses you, ask him "what did you say?" Flag him only if he repeats it. Situations where the abuse is so loud that everyone can hear it may require an immediate flag.
4. Do not penalise the conduct of anyone other than a player or coach. If someone else is giving you a problem, ask the team or game management to deal with it.
5. **Sideline warning:**
 - (a) Give a sideline warning only if a Head Coach repeatedly (i.e. more than once) ignores requests to keep his team back from the sideline.
 - (b) Provided participants in the team area respond reasonably promptly to requests to get back from the sideline, there is no need to warn or penalise them, no matter how many times it happens.
 - (c) Throw the flag for a sideline warning, even if there is no penalty yardage assessed.
6. If action is deemed to be "fighting" then the player must be disqualified. It is *not* fighting if players are merely pushing each other (i.e. no punches, kicks or blows are struck or aimed). If in doubt, it is *not* fighting.
7. During a fight, try to distinguish between those players (on the field at the start of the fight), substitutes and coaches who actively participate in a fight and those who are trying only to separate the combatants. The latter should not be disqualified.
8. Only disqualify a player if you are certain of his number. If two players are involved in a fight, don't disqualify one unless you know the identity of the other.
9. Unnecessary roughness when Team A has clearly indicated its intention to "take a knee" should normally result in disqualification of the player committing the foul.
10. Do not penalise a player or team twice for the same act or series of acts. Normally, all unsportsmanlike actions by the same team during the same down, or period between downs, will result in the enforcement of only one 15-yard penalty.
11. Normally a kicker who simulates being roughed should be ignored. A penalty should only be administered if necessary to exert proper game control.
12. Players who unthinkingly remove their helmets on the field of play should not be penalised unless they are (i) directing anger or criticism at an opponent or an official; or (ii) celebrating. Remind them to keep their helmets on. A player removing their helmet in the vicinity of the sideline just prior to entering the team area should be ignored.
13. Spitting on an opponent requires disqualification.
14. If in doubt as to whether a player has intentionally elbowed an opponent, look at the player's hand. It is a natural reaction to make a fist before striking with the elbow. An open hand probably indicates unintentional contact.

3.5 – Fouls that always involve advantage

The following fouls always involve advantage, even if it doesn't appear so, and shall be called:

1. **Illegal formation:**
 - (a) It is always a foul when Team A has only six (or fewer) men on the line of scrimmage at the snap. Team A gains a blocking advantage by being further away from the defense.
 - (b) It is still a foul for six men on the line of scrimmage even if Team A has only 10 (or fewer) men on the field at the snap.
 - (c) Only call the foul if the seventh man is “obviously” off the line (e.g. his head is clearly behind the rear end of the snapper) or has ignored repeated warnings (i.e. at least 2 warnings).
 - (d) No player (other than the quarterback) should ever be ruled as being neither on the line nor in the backfield – if in doubt consider him as being in the position to make things most legal or (as a wing official) adjust your position slightly to adjust the line of scrimmage to his benefit.
 - (e) Give more leeway to wide receivers and slot backs in determining whether they are on or off the line of scrimmage than you do to interior linemen or tight ends. Be particularly generous on fields that are not well marked out.
 - (f) On a trick or unusual play, formations should have the highest degree of scrutiny and should be penalised unless they are completely legal.
2. **Locking legs:** It is always a foul when offensive linemen (other than the center) lock legs at the snap on a scrimmage-kick play. It advantages the kicking team by closing down the gap to a potential kick blocker, and also leaves the linemen susceptible to leg injuries.
3. **Offensive pass interference:** Blocking downfield by the offense (against a player in pass coverage) on a forward pass play before the ball is thrown is always offensive pass interference. The defense (particularly the safeties) may see a block and read the play as a run, so drawing coverage away from the destination of the subsequent pass. (See paragraph 3.2.9 for how to call offensive pass interference while the ball is in flight.)
4. **Handing the ball forward illegally:** Handing the ball forward (except where allowed by rule) is always a foul. A team can gain significant yardage (as well as the benefits of deception) from this illegal play.
5. **Offside on free kick:**
 - (a) Officiate the Team A restraining line as a plane.
 - (b) On an onside or other short kickoff (deliberate or unintentional), any player (other than the kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked is offside.
 - (c) On a deep kickoff, do not be too technical.
6. **Team A player out of bounds:** Whenever any Team A player returns inbounds after voluntarily going out of bounds during a kick play, or an eligible receiver touches the ball illegally after voluntarily going out of bounds during a pass play, it is always a foul. A Team A player leaving the field of play gains an advantage by avoiding being blocked. Remember that a player is out of bounds even if only one foot touches the sideline or end line – this must be called.
7. **Kick catch interference:** It is always a foul when contact, however slight, is made with a player in position (or moving to position) to catch a kick in flight. His balance will have been disturbed, so hindering his ability to catch the ball cleanly. (See also paragraph 3.3.7)

3.6 – Fouls that are ‘obvious’

Although these fouls are not serious and don’t create a significant advantage, they are so “obvious” to anyone watching that we would look foolish if we didn’t call them:

1. **illegal substitution** when a player leaves the field other than across his own sideline;
2. **illegal substitution** when a team has 12 or more men in the huddle for more than 3 seconds (but don’t nit pick the 3 second limit);
3. **intentional illegal touching** of a forward pass;
4. **false start** by a tight end or wide receiver;
5. **offside** by Team B at their restraining line on a free kick;
6. **free kick out of bounds**.

3.7 – Catches and fumbles

1. A catch should not be regarded as completed if the player never demonstrates complete and firm control over the ball. When in doubt, he does not have complete and firm control. If there is any doubt over a catch and fumble ruling, rule the pass incomplete.
2. If the ball touches the ground in the receiver’s hands, any loss of control of the ball makes the pass incomplete. If there is no loss of control after contacting the ground, it is a catch. If no official sees the ball has hit the ground, rule the pass complete.
3. If an airborne receiver controls the ball and then falls to the ground, he must maintain control of the ball through his fall to be awarded a catch. If the ball never touches the ground, the receiver can regain control as long as he remains inbounds.
4. If the receiver gets his toe inbounds but his heel comes down a fraction later out of bounds (or vice versa) then the pass is incomplete. If the whole foot touches the ground, it all has to be inbounds for the catch to be completed.
5. It is not a fumble if the ball is stripped after the runner has been thrown back. The ball is dead once the runner is so held that his forward progress is stopped.

3.8 – Other rules applications

1. Don’t be picky about fair catch signals. Any waving signal or raising a single arm above the head is sufficient to indicate that a fair catch has been called for. Players obviously shading their eyes from the sun have *not* signalled for a fair catch. Any “get away” signal after the ball touches the ground should be ignored.
2. If in doubt on a poorly marked field, the chain can be used following a free kick to measure whether a spot of first touching is illegal or not.
3. If an interception is made inside the one-yard line, try to make the play a touchback rather than a momentum exception.
4. On normal field goals, no more than five seconds should be run off the clock.
5. It is a touchdown if a non-airborne runner crosses the goal line inside the pylon even if the ball crosses the goal line outside the pylon.
6. Officials should not be distracted from their game duties by the possibility that a head coach may request a timeout. When a snap or free kick is imminent (i.e. when Team A is in its formation), wing officials must not turn their eyes away from the field of play. In these circumstances, the Head Coach may need to attract the attention of one of the officials in the middle of the field (Referee, Umpire, Back Judge), or even the wing official on the opposite sideline, who is facing him. A “T” hand signal (like signal S4) *and* verbalising the word “timeout” are both necessary under these circumstances. When the ball is dead and there is no threat of action on the field, a verbal request to the nearest official will be sufficient. Under no circumstances shall an official stop the clock unless he is certain that the request comes from the *Head Coach*. If the official is

unsure whose voice requested the timeout, and is unable to turn round to find out, no timeout will be granted.

7. During a charged timeout, coaches who come on to the field less than 9 yards from the sideline and do not go beyond the 25-yard lines are not normally to be regarded as a problem unless their behaviour draws attention to themselves.